DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 128 804 CS 202 918

AUTHOR	Ford, James, Comp.; And Others
TITLE	Report on the Working Conference on the SCRDT (Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching) Black English Tests for Teachers (February 19-20, 1976). Occasional Paper No. 15.
INSTITUTION	Stanford Univ., Calif. Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	SCRDT-OP-15
PUB DATE	Aug 76
CONTRACT	NIE-C-74-0049
NOTE	24p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Conference Reports; *Language Tests; *Minority Groups; *Negro Dialects; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Education; Teacher Evaluation; Test Construction
IDENTIFIERS	*Black English; *Teacher Knowledge

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the proceedings and outcomes of a working conference of experts, scholars, and educators, held at Stanford University on February 19-20, 1976. The goal of the conference was to discuss and improve tests constructed as part of an effort to improve the teaching of children who speak one or more varieties of Black English. The tests deal with teachers' knowledge and attitudes related to the history and structure of Black English and reading instruction. Presentations of the tests, discussions in small working groups, comments and criticisms in a general session, and a panel discussion with members of the community all led to the incorporation of a number of important modifications in the preliminary versions of the tests. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED128804

Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching
School of Education, Stanford University
Stanford, California

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Occasional Paper No. 15

REPORT ON THE WORKING CONFERENCE ON THE SCRDT BLACK ENGLISH TESTS FOR TEACHERS (February 19-20, 1976)

Compiled by James Ford, Shirley Lewis, Shirley Hicks, Darlene Williams, Mary Rhodes Hoover, and Robert L. Politzer

August 1976

Published by the Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, supported in part as a research and development center by funds from the National Institute of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position, policy, or endorsement of the National Institute of Education. (Contract No. NIE-C-74-0049.)

CS 202 918

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The mission of the Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching is to improve teaching in American schools. Current major operations include three research and development programs--Teaching Effectiveness, The Environment for Teaching, and Teaching and Linguistic Pluralism--and two programs combining research and technical assistance, the Stanford Urban/Rural Leadership Training Institute and the Hoover/ Stanford Teacher Corps Project. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources is also a part of the Center. A program of exploratory and related studies provides for smaller studies not part of the major programs.

The conference on Black English Tests for Teachers was held as part of the work of the Program on Teaching and Linguistic Pluralism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This was truly a working conference. The participants not only discussed and debated but also wrote sections of the report itself. Our thanks go to all of the participants for their enthusiasm and assistance, and to Orlando Taylor, Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, Juanita Williamson, and Deborah Daniels for contributing test items prior to the conference.

Our special thanks go to Andrea (Abena) Richardson, who coordinated travel arrangements, finances, housing, typing, and the art for the brochures, and served as general troubleshooter for the conference. Thanks also to Annetter Williams, who coordinated the conference catering, and James Everett for the duplicating of the tests themselves.

We are grateful to the Black students at Ujamaa, Lagunita Court, Stanford University, especially Nathan Richardson, Jeanne Ishman, Tammy Morales, and Sibby Freeman, who set up the physical facilities for the panel discussion on the final day of the conference.

We also thank the artists and others involved in the Nairobi reception at Malcolm House, who included Sumi Smart-Cole, Teirrah McNair, Jho McNair, Bobby Hoover, Steven Randall, Delores Randall, and George Roberts.

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the proceedings and outcomes of a working conference of experts, scholars, and educators held at Stanford University on February 19-20, 1976. The goal of the conference was to discuss and improve tests constructed as part of an effort to improve the teaching of children who speak one or more varieties of Black English. The tests deal with teachers' knowledge and attitudes related to the history and structure of Black English and reading instruction. Presentations of the tests, discussions in small working groups, comments and criticisms in a general session, and a panel discussion with members of the community all led to the incorporation of a number of important modifications in the preliminary versions of the tests.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Professional Description	Conference Committee
Carita Chapman	Director, Reading Improvement Program, Chicago, Illinois	Educational
Paula Davis	Assistant Principal, P.S. 100 Elementary School, New York City	Educational
St. Clair Drake	Professor, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University, Stanford, California	Sociopolitical
Edythe Ford	Principal, P.S. 100 Elementary School, New York City	Educational
Henry Goa	Principal, Liberty City Elementary School, Miami, Florida	Educational
William Hall	Professor, Department of Psychology, Rockefeller University, New York City	Linguistics
Claudia Mitchell-Kernan	Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Los Angeles	Linguistics
Belvie Rooks	Journalist (freelance) and Chairperson, Zimbabwe Support Committee, San Francisco, California	Sociopolitical
Omowale Satterwhite	Assistant Superintendent, Ravenswood City School District, East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park, California	Sociopolitical
Calvin Taylor	Director, Urban/Rural School Community Council, Trenton, New Jersey	Educational
Orlando Taylor	Chairman, Department of Speech, Howard University, Washington, D. C.	Linguistics
Anna-Fay Vaughn-Cooke	Lecturer, Department of Linguistics, Georgetown University, Washington, D. C.	Linguistics

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Professional Description	Conference Committee
Gertrude Wilks	Founder, Nairobi Day High School and Director, Mothers for Equal Education, East Palo Alto, California	Education
Juanita Williamson*	Professor, English Department, Le Moyne College, Memphis, Tennessee	Linguistics
Richard Wright	Professor, Department of Speech, Howard University, Washington, D. C.	Linguistics

*D.. Williamson was unable to attend but contributed to the conference by means of telephone and mail.

CONTENTS

Introductory Statement ii
Acknowledgments iii
Abstract iv
List of Participants v

Introduction 1

The Conference Committees 2

Committee Reports 3

The Linguistics Committee 3

The Educational Committee 4

The Sociopolitical Committee 6

Recommendations by the Conference 8

Interaction with the Community 10

Present Status of the Tests 12

References 14

Appendix: Sample Test Items from the SCRDT Black English Tests for Teachers 15

REPORT ON THE WORKING CONFERENCE ON THE SCRDT BLACK ENGLISH TESTS FOR TEACHERS

Compiled by James Ford, Shirley Lewis, Shirley Hicks, Darlene Williams, Mary Rhodes Hoover, and Robert L. Politzer

Introduction

In 1870 the language of Black speakers was described by Judge Carpenter as "a very outlandish idiom . . . [spoken by those] just [as] slightly removed from the animal creation as it is conceivable for man to be" (Bullock, 1970). In 1936 H. L. Mencken described it as "the worst English in the world" (Mencken, 1936). In 1975 Spache called speakers of Black language "language handicapped" and the speech itself "prolific in errors" (Spache, 1975). These statements reflect a generalized view by "middle America" that speakers of non-mainstream speech varieties are less academically able than speakers of mainstream speech varieties. Such views, when held by teachers, often result in low teacher expectations and correspondingly low reading scores among students who are quite capable of learning (Leacock, 1969). One of our goals in the Program on Teaching and Linguistic Pluralism at the Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching (SCRDT) is to alleviate some of this educational oppression by assessing the attitudes of teachers and other educators and then working to change them through our research and workshops.

On February 19 and 20, 1976, a conference was held at Stanford University to obtain assistance in constructing the SCRDT Black English Tests for Teachers. The tests were being designed for three purposes: (a) to measure teachers' knowledge of Black English (especially its history and structure); (b) to gain insight into teachers' pedagogical attitudes on teaching reading and their general knowledge of language; and (c) to ascertain whether this knowledge is in any way related to the

reading achievement of students. The participants were selected from practically all areas of the Black community directly or indirectly involved with the academic advancement of Black students. They included professionals such as elementary school principals and vice-principals and professors who have performed valuable research in the area of Black English. We also tried to gather participants from as many different areas of the country as possible. The confluence and synthesis of their many ideas and the subsequent debates and discussions proved invaluable.

The Conference Committees

The conference participants were divided into three committees: linguistics, educational, and sociopolitical. The linguistics committee was to deal mainly with actual linguistic facts. The educational committee had the primary purpose of discussing the pedagogical implications of Black English. The sociopolitical committee was to examine the social and political factors involved in Black language. The linguistics committee was composed primarily of those guests familiar with linguistic analysis. The educational committee was composed primarily of educational "activists" working directly in the schools at the decision-making level. The sociopolitical committee was composed of individuals whose scholarly knowledge as well as involvement in Black community affairs would prevent the types of mistakes that have been made when attitudes within the Black community were ignored. A good example of such a mistake is the recommendation by certain linguists that reading materials be written in what we call Vernacular Black English. This clearly violates a sociolinguistic rule of the Black community. As a recent study (Hoover, 1975) has shown, Vernacular Black English is highly valued in certain key sociolinguistic domains, but Black parents want their children to receive reading instruction in Standard Black English.[1]

---

[1]Vernacular Black English (VBE) is characterized by certain grammatical patterns, such as an uninflected verb form in the third-person singular (she have rather than she has) and multiple negation ("nobody didn't do it"), and by Black intonation and phonology. Standard Black English (SBE) is characterized by standard grammatical patterns combined with Black intonation and phonology.

Committee Reports

Linguistics Committee

A child who enters a formal educational system in which the language of instruction differs from his first language faces a number of disadvantages. Foremost, of course, is the problem of mutual intelligibility--understanding others and in turn making himself understood. Many recent studies in sociolinguistics have demonstrated that the degree to which two languages or dialects are mutually intelligible not only depends on their actual structural differences but also involves in large measure the attitudes and values of the speakers. In many majority-minority language settings the use of the minority language may be suppressed. Equally important, along with suppression there is a set of attitudes and values that tends to denigrate the value of the minority language or dialect.

It should be emphasized that such values may be held not only by speakers of the majority language or dialect but also by speakers of the minority language or dialect themselves. Such a situation has usually been brought about by complex historical and sociopolitical factors. Their net effect in the educational setting, however, is to introduce tensions that teachers and students alike are ill-equipped to handle. To meet this problem, of course, teachers must reexamine their attitudes and values in the broad context of their historical and sociopolitical origins. But before such a step can be taken, teachers need to have a better linguistic understanding of the minority child's dialect. This information is important because it forces them to reconceptualize and redefine the problem the teacher faces. A teacher who understands the actual linguistic system being used by a minority child and sees it in a positive light can engage rather than repel the child and enhance rather than denigrate an important ingredient in the child's identity: his indigenous language. Furthermore, understanding the language used by children can be a powerful asset in planning educational experiences for them.

The SCRDT Black English Tests for Teachers can contribute to the goal of improving teachers' understanding of--and attitudes toward--Black English speech varieties by

1. assessing teachers' knowledge of the phonological, grammatical, lexical, and stylistic features characteristic of the speech varieties used by American Blacks;
2. increasing teachers' ability to distinguish among the various types of Black speech and to distinguish between the vernacular varieties of Black speech and pathologies of speech and language;
3. providing a basis for determining those areas in which teachers' knowledge of American Black speech is deficient, so that appropriate training programs can be planned;
4. introducing new knowledge to teachers in a relatively stress-free situation and in a way that is likely to motivate them to learn more.

The Educational Committee

The fact that the majority of students in urban schools are Black accentuates the need for teachers to become more sensitive to the needs and academic expectations of the Black students and parents whom they serve. American society has always been conscious of the problems speakers of Vernacular Black English face, but it has never provided any high-quality input into the educational system that would effectively alleviate these problems. Studies involving speakers of VBE indicate a number of variables significantly related to teaching strategies in the language arts area. There is an abundance of evidence that the self-conceptualization of Black and minority children is a significant factor in the learning process. It has also been established that teachers play an important role in developing and sustaining positive self-concepts in their students. Of course, the devaluation of Black culture and Black language tends to create a negative rather than a positive self-concept among Black children.

Recent research on attitudes toward language has shown conclusively that (a) teacher attitude toward the language of students is a reliable indicator of how the teacher perceives and interacts with students, and (b) Black students who speak VBE have been especially victimized by negative

teacher attitudes. Much of the problem is related directly to socially acquired, unexamined assumptions about minority populations whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds are different from that of the American mainstream. General ignorance of the true nature of such differences, especially regarding VBE, is a major factor contributing to continued negative perceptions of VBE and, by extension, of VBE speakers.

Teachers who work in highly interpersonal settings with young people need to be aware that their perception of a student's speech is subtly communicated to the student in their unconscious verbal as well as nonverbal behavior. Students who feel that a teacher does not respect their native language skills are less likely to profit academically from their experience in that teacher's classroom. In this way a teacher may be indirectly contributing to the continued poor academic performance of the very students who need to improve the most.

The SCRDT Black English Tests for Teachers are designed to identify negative teacher attitudes toward Black English and to supply an organized body of information that can serve as the focus of in-service teacher education programs about VBE. Teachers who know the characteristics of VBE and recognize its legitimacy will have a more positive attitude toward children who speak it. Moreover, greater acceptance of VBE among educators can have a major impact on the development of curriculum materials that will enable the teacher to create an enriched language environment in which Black students are free to exercise and develop their skills.

Another specific educational use of the SCRDT Black English Tests for Teachers is that they can help the test takers to become more acutely aware of their <u>own</u> beliefs, opinions, and knowledge about teaching reading and other language arts to speakers of VBE. The tests will encourage teachers openly to express their views and beliefs, and for many they may raise important new issues for consideration. Teachers then can examine and reexamine some of their personal views in relation to sound pedagogical knowledge.

Finally, the tests may inspire teacher-training institutions to include Black English as a course of study in their programs. As educators become more aware of the need to recognize Black English in both of its forms--VBE and SBE--as a rich and vital part of Black culture, the demand for greater understanding will necessitate a course of study for all teachers. Each educator is a potential teacher of VBE-speaking students.

The Sociopolitical Committee

Black English is not an isolated phenomenon owing its development to unique and peculiar historical factors but part of a broad international pattern: the almost universal political domination that White, European societies have exercised over chiefly non-European, non-White peoples. As a result of these political conditions, in the cultural sphere deficit-analysis theories emerged to explain the widespread differences between Europeans and non-Europeans. Blacks were assigned the greatest deficit of all. Arnold Toynbee, a widely-known and influential historian, asserted that "The Black races alone have not contributed positively to any civilization as yet" (Toynbee, 1947; italics added). Blacks and other non-Europeans adopted many of these deficit attitudes themselves, though they have always managed to maintain many positive attitudes as well. Yet deficit-analysis theories played a role and still do play a role in the development of Black English, especially in the establishment of sociolinguistic rules. Any attempt to understand the bases of Black English, then, must take into account the role that deficit-analysis theories have played in its development.

In the aftermath of World War II, however, there emerged a new phenomenon that since then has evolved into an irresistible worldwide movement: the rejection of old deficit notions regarding non-European, third-world culture, society, and life-styles.

These changes have not been complete nor have they occurred suddenly, but only after fierce competition with the old notions of racism and the old deficit-analysis theories, which from time to time have been resurrected by members of White academia--notably Shockley and Jensen. Their

theories unfortunately have had wide and profound influence in society at large and have provided the foundation for deficit, racist ideas and practices that still persist in certain key sectors of education. The field of IQ testing is an example (e.g., Jencks, 1972; Jensen, 1969). As many as fifty years ago it was shown that IQ tests measure academic achievement, not intelligence (Kagan, 1969). In the realm of academic achievement, IQ can best be described as a measure of "cultural assimilation" or "communicative competence" in the American mainstream, a world that excludes millions of Americans, among them many Whites. Yet this anachronistic notion--that IQ tests measure intelligence--is resurrected every generation or so, primarily to support the claim that Blacks are genetically inferior and hence "uneducable." The most dire result is that the establishment of effective programs to deal with the many and assorted problems in minority education has been retarded.

It can be shown that focusing on "mental life" as it relates to specific cultural experience provides a way out of this situation. An approach using this type of focus yields information about children that is both accurate and fair. Capitalizing on the natural first language of a group of children represents one example of this approach. Two psychologists working with school-age children in St. Louis, Missouri (Williams & Rivers, 1972), have shown that the language code in which material is presented can make a dramatic difference in performance. Indeed, the performance of low-income Black children matches that of high-income White children when this important factor is controlled. One must certainly conclude that the controversy over IQ difference and racial background is in some measure a function of language code and also of true differences in vocabulary usage.

The committee provided the following summaries concerning the general results to be expected from the tests as well as the specific uses to which the test results could be put. The conclusions regarding functions were that the test

1. provides a good documentation of the existence of cultural differences based on linguistic patterns;

2. can identify for parents and educators some of the subtly racist assumptions inherent in our educational system;
3. provides a positive experience in which people who give and use tests all the time to make judgments about others are themselves being tested for "cultural deficiency";
4. demonstrates to teachers that they are very often monodialectal in situations that demand bidialectalism.

Some conclusions regarding specific uses of the test results were the following:

1. Some possible adaptation of the attitudinal sections of the tests could be given to parents and students in order to identify perceptions, attitudes, and values that were sufficiently different from those of the teachers to adversely affect the learning environment.
2. The tests could be used to demonstrate to some teachers that they are not aware of the richness, range, and variety of Black culture as reflected in Black speech.
3. The tests would be useful for the purpose of establishing guidelines for curriculum development in the areas of Black history and Black culture, including curricula at the college and university levels.
4. The results could be useful for revealing attitudes relating to elitism and class identification.

Recommendations by the Conference

The linguistics committee suggested the inclusion of more items concerning Black "speech events"; that is, items on such Black communication styles as "cappin'," "markin'," "loud-mouthin'," and so on. The educational committee suggested additional items on parental involvement and community control. It was felt that this topic would reach an aspect of attitudinal values about Black culture and language not reached by other items. For instance, those who feel that Black language and culture are "exotic," "cute," or "childlike" might not be in favor of community control, accountability, or self-determination for non-mainstream people. The sociopolitical committee found the test to be a good index of racism. Members of the committee felt that some items should be added to measure elitism, which in their opinion was as significant as racism.

While the guest participants were generally supportive of the tests, they did suggest some changes and modifications. Below, we summarize their most important suggestions.

Items using the technical terminology of linguistics would be unfamiliar to most teachers taking the tests and should be either eliminated or explained in a more suitable way. For example, one test item was reworded so that the linguistic term "structural interference" was replaced by the more familiar word "prevents."

Modifications of some answers and distractors were suggested in order to make answer choices within a given item more distinctly different. These modifications included the addition of other more widely used VBE examples and the substitution of more appropriate or more specific alternatives. For example, in the test item asking for the identification of High John the Conqueror, the correct answer was changed from the folk hero who outwitted the master during slavery days to "a root used for healing and religious purposes," since the latter meaning is the one most commonly used today.

Some participants thought that there should be four rather than three answer choices in order to lower the guessing rate. Others believed that three was sufficient, given that the alternatives were well stated, that they were closely associated, and that there were no obviously incorrect distractors. Ultimately, it was agreed to keep the number of alternatives at three.

Some discussion centered on the fact that the number of items varied among the different areas covered by the tests: language (history and structure), teaching, and attitude. It was agreed that the areas were equally important and that they should be represented equally in the test. It was further recommended that the language section be used as a guide for the format of the others, since it was the most compactly constructed section and contained the fewest items.

Much attention was given to distinguishing characteristics of Black English that have educational significance (e.g., the use of vernacular word endings such as "fifty cent") from those that have social significance (e.g., the speech event called "markin'") and from others that seem

relatively insignificant in either sense (the "pen/pin" homonymy, for example). It was pointed out that linguistic standards vary considerably according to region; the tests must be constructed to take this fact into account. Furthermore, the suggestion was made that the term "Southern" be used in addition to the term "Vernacular Black." As research by Juanita Williamson (1971) suggests, all speech influences and is influenced by the speech of others. Professor Williamson has strongly recommended that the test identify many characteristics as being both Black Vernacular and Southern. Some participants (Professors Taylor and Wright) agreed in principle with Professor Williamson's position, citing in one case a recent conference on the topic " The Death of Black English." Out of the discussion concerning definitions and labels came a strong recommendation to be extremely careful when referring to Vernacular Black English (VBE) and to include in it only those elements of language predominantly characteristic of Blacks. It was suggested that the term Black English be used to refer to the wide varieties of speech used by Blacks and possibly others, but that the terms Southern and VBE be used when referring to elements of language shared by Blacks and Southern Whites.

It was agreed that highly charged terms such as "disadvantaged," "culturally deprived," and "slow learner" should not be used in any serious discussion of Black language or culture. The suggestion was made that as a counter to deficit notions, the final versions of the tests include a bibliography acknowledging contributions of such Black scholars as Zora Neale Hurston, who wrote about High John the Conqueror in Mules and Men, and Lorenzo Turner, who laid the foundation of the present controversy over and interest in Black English by his classic description of Gullah speech, Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect.

Interaction with the Community

The planners of this conference felt that it would be sterile to have a conference involving Black English without tapping in some way the rich resources of the Black community, without which we would have no data, and thus no research. So often the community that serves as

the subject of research by a small group of experts only hears of the results from newspaper accounts. Black communities are often thought to be too illiterate to be addressed directly by the experts who study them, and thus another self-fulfilling prophecy is created: since the expert has no commitment to talk to the community, his speech becomes so elaborate that he can no longer be understood.

At SCRDT it has always been our philosophy that we should give something to the community in which we carry out our research in order that the ensuing relationship not develop into an exploitative one. We always pay those involved in our research, and the entire staff of the program voluntarily gives workshops for the community. Community involvement, therefore, is not new to us, but is a part of our everyday approach to research.

For these reasons two Black communities were made an integral part of the conference. They were the East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park Black communities, where much of our research has taken place and many Black Stanford students live. The involvement took the form of a reception at which we introduced our conference guests to the community and a panel discussion which included invited guests and members of the community. The theme of the panel discussion was "The Relevance of Black English to Black Liberation." Since we had fourteen conference guests and over a hundred community members in attendance, we can only cover the highlights of the discussion here.

Some of the comments made were "Black children <u>can</u> learn to read in spite of their speech," "It is important to separate Black English <u>speakers</u> from speech <u>problems</u>," and "As language is inherently social, it is inherently political. We need to study and act to improve the conditions of poor people and use language towards that end." Another guest gave a concrete illustration of the use of Black language for political education. She related how excerpts from speeches by Martin Luther King and other Black political orators along with elements of language of Black folk-culture and Black protest-oriented music were utilized in radio advertisements for a political rally.

Several of the panelists stressed that folklore is a vital part of Black language. One panelist felt that it should be included in the curriculum at least as supplementary reading material, especially in the form of African themes that appear in folklore, such as the Ananse Tales of Jamaica (animal stories that characterize many speech and social events and that have protagonists such as the trickster, akin to Black America's Brer Rabbit). It was also suggested that the curriculum should include scholarly works such as Turner's Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect and Peter Woods' Black Majority, which is a history of South Carolina containing a chapter on Black English that deals with the historical roots of the Gullah language.

Other speakers felt that the curriculum should include protest literature that represents Black language at its best; for example, some of the dialect poetry of Paul Lawrence Dunbar (such as "My Sort 'a Man") and recurring Black key words and symbols, such as the reference to Ethiopia in David Walker's Appeal of 1829 (a document which clearly illustrates that protest has been present in the Black experience for quite some time).

In general the panel discussion was not primarily concerned with the Black English tests, but the various suggestions concerning the inclusion of the history of Black culture and language in the curriculum furnished valuable information about possible items for the parts of the test dealing with the history of Black English.

Present Status of the Tests

Based on many of the ideas that emerged in the conference and on our previous efforts, we finished a draft of the tests. We have administered them in four cities: the Harlem community of New York; Miami, Florida; East Palo Alto/East Menlo Park, California; and Trenton, New Jersey. We are only now beginning to evaluate the results of the tests in order that we may further refine them.

Those interested in obtaining information about the progress and development of the tests can write to:

Program on Teaching and Linguistic Pluralism
Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

We would like to conclude this report with the words of Omowale Satterwhite, written at the conference:

> There is a growing concern about the importance of developing valid and reliable evaluation instruments which are useful tools for assessing the attitudes and competencies of teachers of Black and minority children. The SCRDT Black English Tests for Teachers are designed to provide school personnel with an objective index of knowledge and understanding of Standard Black English and Vernacular Black English as a basis of improving the teaching of reading. The tests are among the first significant attempts to identify and codify selected variables characteristic of teachers of Black children that impact upon depressed pupil achievement. As an educational tool, they provide an objective basis for assisting school personnel in more effectively organizing instructional programs in reading. There is an abundance of evidence pointing out the biasness of tests and in many instances their lack of relevancy to the educational process . . . This test can replace or supplement such programs such as the NTE [National Teachers' Examination] as a means for valid and reliable assessment of teacher attitudes and competencies.

REFERENCES

Bullock, H. A. A History of Negro Education in the South. New York: Praeger, 1970.

Hoover, Mary E. R. Appropriate Use of Black English by Black Children as Rated by Parents (Technical Report No. 46). Stanford, Ca.: Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, 1975.

Jencks, C. Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America. New York: Basic Books, 1972.

Jensen, A. R. "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" Harvard Educational Review, 39 (1969), 1-123.

Kagan, J. S. "Inadequate Evidence and Illogical Conclusions." Harvard Educational Review, 39 (1969), 274-77.

Kuhn, T. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Leacock, E. Teaching and Learning in City Schools. New York: Basic Books, 1969.

Mencken, H. L. The American Language. New York: Knopf, 1936.

Spache, G. Good Reading for the Disadvantaged Reader. Champaign, Ill.: Garrard Publishing Company, 1975.

Toynbee, A. A Study of History. London: Oxford University Press, 1947.

Williams, R., and Rivers, W. "Mismatches in Testing from Black English." Unpublished paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, 1972.

Williamson, J. "A Look at Black English." The Crisis, 78, 6 (1971), 169-74.

APPENDIX

Sample Test Items from the SCRDT Black English Tests for Teachers

HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF BLACK ENGLISH†

1. Black English is most likely to have developed from:
   a) writings prepared for minstrel shows.
   b) corruptions of British Isles Dialects.
   * c) influences of African and English language patterns.

12. Which of the following is most likely to be true of Black English?
   a) It is a dialect of English which preserves its original form more than any other dialect.
   b) It has not yet had time to develop a systematic grammar.
   * c) It is an evolving language variety reflecting the social experiences of its speakers.

45. High John the Conqueror is:
   a) a religious leader in the Black church.
   * b) a root used for healing and religious purposes.
   c) a famous slave holder.

TEACHING

53. Schools in which Black children learn to read successfully are generally characterized by heavy emphasis on:
   a) a look-say reading approach, unstructured approach to discipline, and high teacher expectations.
   b) language experience reading method, behavior modification-type discipline, and high teacher expectations.
   * c) decoding approach to reading, structured approach to discipline, and high teacher expectations.

---

*Correct answer.

†Please note that these items are only samples selected from a preliminary version of the tests.

54. The "schwa" is:

a) one of the letters in a consonant cluster.

b) a nonsense syllable.

* c) the "uh" sound that occurs when a vowel is unstressed.

55. The Montessori method is:

* a) an approach to early learning through self-pacing and play-oriented equipment.

b) a new approach to discipline utilizing biofeedback.

c) a method designed to encourage summative evaluation learning.

ATTITUDE†

	Agree Strongly	Agree Mildly	Neutral	Disagree Mildly	Disagree Strongly
76. Black children can learn to read in spite of the fact that most readers are written in textbook English.					
93. All teachers of Black children should know what Black English is, but should not be encouraged to speak it unless they are native speakers themselves.					

†This section was developed for research purposes and ultimately will not be included in the SCRDT Black English Tests for Teachers. The Program on Teaching and Linguistic Pluralism has, however, developed the SCRDT Black English Attitude Measures, consisting of a speech varieties attitude test and a teacher attitude scale.